

CLAIMS

1. A terminal (110) for allowing a first user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected with the first user via a network (300), the terminal comprising:

an input for receiving the first user's selection of media content for presentation, substantially in real-time, by a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal (110), the media presentation device using a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300);

means for determining an identifier corresponding to the selected media content;

means for sending the identifier to terminals (200, 250) of the other users in the group over the network (300); and,

means (410) for allowing the first user to discuss the media content with the other users in the group.

2. A terminal according to claim 1 further comprising:

means for receiving (112, 410), via the network (300), an identifier of media content selected by another user of the group;

means for determining a source of media content corresponding to the received identifier; and,

means for selecting the determined source on a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal (110).

3. A terminal according to claim 1 or 2 wherein the means for allowing the user to discuss the media content is an internet chat application (410) which communicates with an external host (320).

4. A terminal according to claim 3 wherein the identifiers of media content are sent to, or received from, the external host (320).

5. A terminal according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the identifier is a unique identifier of the media content.

6. A terminal according to any one of the preceding claims wherein the
5 selected media content is a broadcast channel for reception on a broadcast receiver (150, 160) local to the terminal (110).

7. A terminal according to claim 6 wherein the means for determining an
10 identifier is arranged to determine an identifier corresponding to a programme currently being broadcast on the selected channel.

8. A terminal according to claim 7 wherein the means for determining an
15 identifier is arranged to access a source of programme information (420) to determine which programme is being broadcast on the selected broadcast channel.

9. A terminal according to claim 8 wherein the source of programme
information is a source of programme information on the network (300).

20 10. A terminal according to claim 9 wherein the identifier is a uniform resource locator (URL) of an entry in the online source of programme information.

11. A terminal according to claim 8 wherein the source of programme
25 information is a broadcast source of programme information.

12. A terminal according to any one of claims 8-11 wherein the source of
programme information is an electronic programme guide (EPG).

30 13. A terminal according to any one of claims 7-12 wherein the broadcast receiver is a television receiver (150) or a radio receiver (160).

14. A terminal according to claim 2 wherein, when the selected media content is a broadcast channel, the means for determining a source is arranged to find a corresponding channel, or a channel broadcasting corresponding content, on a broadcast receiver (150, 160) local to the terminal
5 (110).

15. A terminal according to claim 2 wherein, in the event that the means for determining a source is unable to locate a source which can be presented by a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal, the terminal
10 (110) is arranged to find an alternative source having the same content.

16. A terminal according to claim 15 wherein the terminal is arranged to find a source on the network (300) having the same content.

15 17. A terminal according to any one of the preceding claims in the form of a remote control (110) for operating the media presentation device.

18. A terminal according to any one of claims 1 to 16 in the form of a set-top box (800).
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19. A terminal according to any one of claims 1 to 16 in the form of a PC (850).

20. A terminal according to claim 19 wherein the media presentation device
25 is a broadcast receiver (860) housed within the PC (850).

21. A terminal (110) for allowing a user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected via a network (300) comprising:

30 means for receiving an identifier of media content selected by another user of the group;

means for determining a source of media content corresponding to the received identifier; and,

means for selecting the determined source on a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the receiver which uses a delivery mechanism
5 which is independent of the network (300).

22. A method of operating a terminal (110) to allow a first user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected with the first user via a network (300), comprising:

10 receiving the first user's selection of media content for presentation, substantially in real-time, by a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal (110), the media presentation device (150, 160, 170) using a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300);

determining an identifier corresponding to the selected media content;

15 sending the identifier to terminals of the other users in the group over the network (300); and,

allowing the first user to discuss the media content with the other users in the group.

20 23. A method of operating a terminal (110) to allow a user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected with the first user via a network (300) comprising:

receiving an identifier of media content selected by another user of the group;

25 determining a source of media content corresponding to the received identifier; and,

selecting the determined source on a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal which uses a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300).

24. A control apparatus for a terminal (110) for allowing a first user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected via a network (300) comprising:

means for receiving the first user's selection of media content for presentation, substantially in real-time, by a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal (110), the media presentation device (150, 160, 170) using a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300);

means (420) for determining an identifier corresponding to the selected media content;

means for sending the identifier to terminals of the other users in the group over the network; and,

means (410) for allowing the first user to discuss the media content with the other users in the group.

25. A control apparatus for a terminal (110) for allowing a user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users who are interconnected via a network (300) comprising:

means for receiving an identifier of media content selected by another user of the group;

means for determining a source of media content corresponding to the received identifier; and,

means for selecting the determined source on a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the receiver which uses a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300).

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26. Software for causing a control apparatus of a terminal (110) for allowing a first user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other users to perform the steps of:

receiving the first user's selection of media content for presentation, substantially in real-time, by a media presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the terminal (110), the media presentation device (150, 160, 170) using a delivery mechanism which is independent of the network (300);

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determining an identifier corresponding to the selected media content;
sending the identifier to terminals of the other users in the group over
the network; and,
allowing the first user to discuss the media content with the other users
5 in the group.

27. Software for causing a control apparatus of a terminal (110) for allowing
a user to have a shared experience of media content with a group of other
users who are interconnected via a network (300) to perform the steps of:
10 receiving an identifier of media content selected by another user of the
group;
determining a source of media content corresponding to the received
identifier; and,
selecting the determined source on a media presentation device (150,
15 160, 170) local to the terminal which uses a delivery mechanism which is
independent of the network (300).

28. A method of providing a service to a group of users who are
interconnected via a network (300), comprising the steps of:
20 receiving an identifier of a first user's selection of media content which
is to be viewed by the group, the identifier representing the first user's
selection of media content which is to be presented in real-time by a media
presentation device (150, 160, 170) local to the first user which uses a delivery
mechanism which is independent of the network (300);
25 sending the identifier to terminals of the other users in the group over
the network (300) so as to allow terminals at those users to select the same
media content on a media presentation device local to them; and,
supporting a discussion group to allow the group to discuss the selected
media content.